

The background of the cover is a grayscale photograph of a military Humvee. In the foreground, the silhouettes of two soldiers are prominent. The soldier on the left is facing right, holding a rifle. The soldier on the right is facing forward, wearing a helmet. In the background, a Humvee is parked on a street. A family consisting of a man, a woman, and a child is standing near the open rear door of the vehicle. The overall scene suggests a conflict zone or a high-risk environment.

Countermeasure

ARMY GROUND RISK-MANAGEMENT INFORMATION

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APRIL 2004

Be Safe!

**The Army's Safety Campaign
to Prevent Accidents**

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features



on the web

<http://safety.army.mil>

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Incoming! The Army Safety Campaign

Our Acting Secretary of the Army, the Honorable Les Brownlee and our Army Chief of Staff, GEN Peter Schoomaker, send a letter to every Army family who has lost a Soldier while serving in the Global War on Terrorism. For those of us who

have had to write those somber letters, we will never forget how heart wrenching it was each and every time. The welfare of our Soldiers is our greatest responsibility, and the death of any American Soldier is something our senior leadership takes very personally.

The Army leadership has always emphasized the enforcement of safety. However, this January Secretary Brownlee hit a new point of emphasis; he was simply sick of sending letters to families who lost loved ones to accidental fatalities. During Fiscal Year 2003, 255 Soldiers died in accidents. In the first four months of this year, 101 Soldiers have died. We certainly have a tough job to do for our Nation, and we cannot afford to be risk-averse. However, accidental fatalities are NOT the cost of doing business. Engaged, caring leadership can prevent accidents from happening.

In a January trip to Iraq, Secretary Brownlee saw first-hand the effect of quality leadership in the actions of a young company commander. Before any vehicle rolled out on a mission, the captain looked each Soldier directly in the eye and said, "I want YOU to be safe!" He wasn't doing it out of procedure or obligation. He was doing it because his unit was a "band of brothers" who truly cared about each other's safe return. Because they cared so deeply for one another, safety was personal.

When Secretary Brownlee returned from Iraq, he charged the Army Safety Center to develop an Army Safety Campaign and inspire units across the Army to adopt the model he saw in Iraq. The motto for the Army Safety Campaign is "BE SAFE!" Why be safe? Because your Soldiers are counting on you to bring them home safely, and your family is counting on you to make it home.

The practice of bringing all your soldiers home safely is a lot tougher than writing it on paper. Commanders and leaders in the field are already doing a great job at pushing the importance of safe practices and protecting their Soldiers' welfare. However, the Army Safety Campaign will apply Army-level resources, communication tools, and knowledge that are not available at the unit level. The Campaign will have two main efforts: (1) to enable Army leaders at all levels to risk manage more effectively through the use of new Web-based tools, and (2) to inspire stringent enforcement of basic standards through a multi-faceted communication campaign.

The Army Safety Center is working overtime to build and refine Web-based programs and put Army-level safety knowledge at the hands of all Soldiers. These tools, the Army Safety Management Information System-1 (ASMIS-1), Risk Management Information System (RMIS), Accident Reporting Automation System (ARAS), and the Commander's

DASAF'S CORNER

From the Director of Army Safety

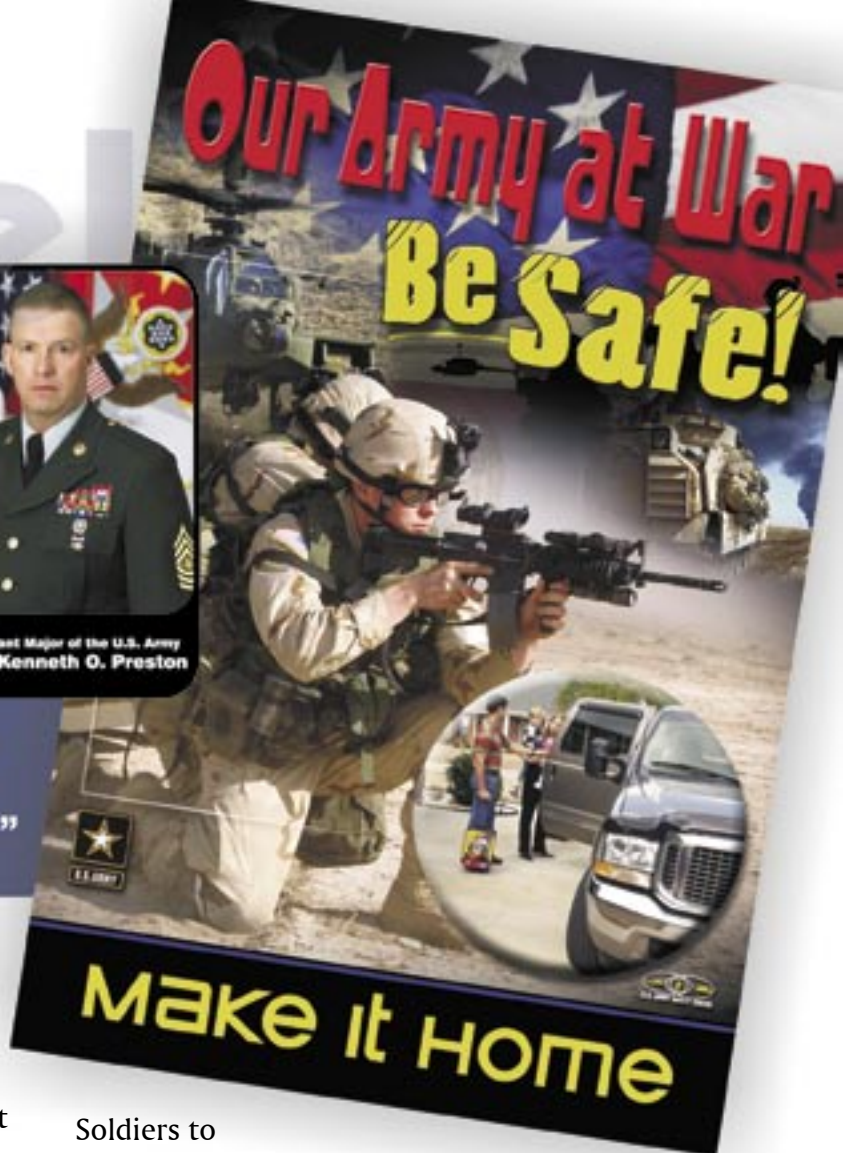


“Communication of the Army Safety Campaign began with emphasis at the highest level.”

Safety Brief, if used, give the leader on the ground the ability to predict and prevent the most likely accidents.

Communication of the Army Safety Campaign began with emphasis at the highest level. The campaign plan was briefed to general officers at the Senior Army Leader Conference in early February. Secretary Brownlee, GEN Schoomaker, and Sergeant Major of the Army Kenneth Preston personally appear in the Army Safety Campaign Video found on our Web site, providing every Soldier and Army employee with their message. SMA Preston has taken the lead in communicating the importance of proper training and standards enforcement throughout our Army. For example, in this issue of *Countermeasure* he addresses the troubling problem of negligent discharges.

In addition to our senior leadership, the Army Safety Center has provided new tools to help you communicate the importance of safety to your Soldiers. The “Drive to Arrive” series of videos includes top country music stars and NASCAR drivers asking our young



Soldiers to use risk management and stay safe.

All of our new risk-management and communication tools can be found on our Web site at www.safety.army.mil. Be part of the Army Safety Campaign; take five minutes to look and see what is there. Inspire the Soldiers in your unit to do the same. It may help your unit predict and prevent the next accident. Most of all, rigidly enforce those basic standards that may be inconvenient but, nonetheless, keep your Soldiers safe. A simple correction or additional question may prevent you from having to send a terrible letter. ☒

Our Army at War—Be Safe! Make it Home Wherever You Are

BG Joseph A. Smith

Safety Alert:

HMMWW Electrical Fires

1. There were three significant accidents where HMMWWs caught fire while being transported. A Class A fire (more than \$1 million loss) occurred in a ship hold where a suspected "Protective Control Box" allowed a starter to overheat and catch fire, destroying four communication HMMWWs and damaging four others. The second fire occurred during an Air Force Air Mobility Command C-17 flight when a dirty STE/ICE-R diagnostic connector (cannon plug) allowed current flow and resulted in smoke filling the cabin. The plane had to make an emergency landing. The third incident occurred on board another transport ship when the front winch began smoking. The cause and damage cost was not reported.

2. Surface Deployment and Distribution Command (SDDC) is reiterating the publication of the following Safety of Use Messages (SOUMs) and Maintenance Advisory Messages (MAMs) for all Deploying Unit Commander Actions:

MAM #98-006	DATE:	201809Z FEB 98
MAM #98-007	DATE:	201819Z FEB 98
TACOM SOUM #99-07	DATE:	R 301214Z APR 99
TACOM SOUM #00-015	DATE:	R 311651Z MAY 00
TACOM SOUM #01-012	DATE:	R 20145Z MAR 01
TACOM SOUM #02-002	DATE:	R 171515Z JAN 02

Web site to retrieve these messages: <http://aeps.ria.army.mil>

All deploying unit commanders are requested to ensure unit vehicle maintenance personnel comply with all technical maintenance manuals, instructions, and above messages. The SDDC requests that all HMMWWs be inspected for electrical system defects prior to deploying from home installation and before arriving at ports of debarkation.

Joseph A. Smith
Brigadier General, U.S. Army
Commanding





Do You Really Know That Weapon is

About a year ago, then Sergeant Major of the Army Jack Tilley published an article in *Countermeasure* magazine discussing negligent weapons discharges. It's time to revisit this serious issue. Since the beginning of the Global War on Terrorism, 25 Soldiers have died and another 14 have suffered permanent disabilities because of negligent weapons discharges. In almost every case, it was another member of the Soldier's unit who was responsible. How tragic to survive the battlefield only to be shot by your battle buddy! Who is the real enemy?

Some think these numbers are relatively low, but I'm here to tell you even one is unacceptable and we, as leaders, can't stand for it. We must identify the problem, establish solutions, and train our Soldiers so we'll never have to tell another family member their loved one died because of "friendly fire." Accidental or negligent discharge—call it whatever you want—is a core safety issue I am focusing on as Sergeant Major of the Army.

Many of these discharges occurred in base camps or areas where the weapons control status was "green" except for Soldiers in a security role. So

what went wrong in these incidents?

In almost every case Soldiers didn't follow established procedures on when, where, and how to clear their weapons. We call these procedures "standards." You'll find clearing barrels at the entrances of compounds and base camps, at the base of guard towers, and at helipads. Clearing barrels are the focal point for leaders such as OICs, NCOICs, and convoy commanders to ensure their Soldiers' weapons are cleared and in green status.

In one incident a Soldier was shot and killed in his tent because another Soldier didn't clear his weapon when his team returned from a mission. Peeling the onion a little more, we found this Soldier was riding in the back of a truck with several other Soldiers and was asleep during the clearing process. These Soldiers weren't required to dismount the truck, so instead they handed their weapons to another Soldier on the ground to clear them. Unfortunately, one weapon—the one involved in the shooting—was missed. In this incident, unit leaders failed to hold Soldiers responsible for clearing their weapons and NCOs responsible for supervising the process. The result of leaders not enforcing standards and

allowing Soldiers to become complacent was the needless death of a young Soldier.

In another incident a Soldier was killed when he was shot in the head by a 25 mm cannon on an M2A2 Bradley Fighting Vehicle (BFV). The deceased Soldier and another Soldier were standing approximately 20 feet in front of the BFV, which was positioned on the unit perimeter for security operations. The crew kept the 25 mm cannon loaded, with the "ghost round" cycled. The BFV was unmanned until the driver entered the vehicle to start the engine. When he switched on the MASTER POWER switch, the 25 mm cannon cycled and fired a round, killing the Soldier. The other Soldier was severely wounded in the neck by a discarding petal from the projectile.

How if Loaded?

SMA KENNETH O. PRESTON
Sergeant Major of the Army

I told this story while visiting troops stationed around Iraq and asked them if they would ever stand in front of a loaded weapon on a range. In every case the answer was "Never!" We must emphasize that we train as we are going to fight.

In this incident, unit leaders allowed Soldiers to become complacent about the potential danger associated with weapons orientation. Unit leaders did not enforce keeping loaded crew-served or vehicle-mounted weapons manned at all times.

I love to watch seasoned Soldiers and leaders moving along a busy city street. Seasoned Soldiers know their weapons are lethal and ensure their muzzles are never pointed at anyone as they move among the populace. These Soldiers instinctively practice muzzle awareness all the time.

When in the ready position, seasoned Soldiers keep their trigger finger poised alongside their weapon's magazine well and off the trigger until they need, or anticipate the need, to shoot. How do Soldiers become seasoned and skilled? The answer is training and experience.

Training enforces important disciplines such

as muzzle awareness and trigger finger position. Leaders must teach and enforce the right standards and never allow Soldiers to become complacent in weapons handling. Weapons handling is a perishable skill. Repetitive focused training builds experience, creating Soldiers who are inherently safe.

Long periods of time between training events or during combat operations (when it might be hard to train) can lead to complacency. Recurring focused training on weapons handling and unit standing operating procedures can combat complacency and reinforce established standards. We need the discipline of first-line leaders along with the oversight of senior leaders to halt these needless, tragic deaths.


Negligent discharges often happen because of the reasons listed below:

- Lack of muzzle awareness and discipline
- Insufficient training
- Ineffective supervision
- Negligence
- Inattentiveness
- Indiscipline

These same reasons caused nine Soldiers to be killed or seriously wounded while cleaning their weapons. Soldiers not clearing their weapons and maintaining a weapons control green status in designated areas killed or wounded 18 others. Twelve Soldiers were injured or killed because of a lack of muzzle awareness and discipline, coupled with unintentionally pulling the trigger. Learn the standard, teach the standard, and enforce the standard.

I've learned during the last year that if a unit doesn't have well-established standards and discipline before they deploy to Afghanistan, Iraq, or the Balkans, they'll have a tough time establishing standards once they're there. Ultimately, it's Soldiers who pay the price in needless deaths and accidents.

Weapons proficiency is the province of the NCO. From the youngest corporal to the Sergeant Major of the Army, we're the primary trainers and guardians of the standard. Competence is our watchword. Our young Soldiers look to us for an example to follow.

The Soldiers we train today will be tomorrow's leaders; just as today's leaders will be tomorrow's senior leaders. We must give our Soldiers and leaders the tools, techniques, and procedures to prepare them for that task. I need your help! 

Hooah!



Are Captured Weapons Safe to Shoot?

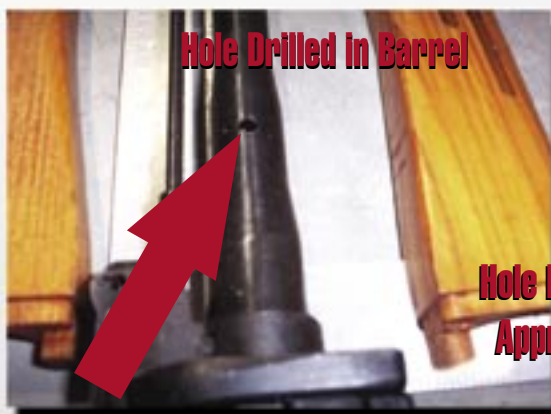
BOB VAN ELSBERG
Managing Editor

Ever since David felled Goliath and used the giant's own sword to behead him, warriors have captured their enemy's weapons and used them or kept them as trophies. Sometimes using the enemy's weapons is a battlefield expedient. Many soldiers in Vietnam cast away their malfunctioning M-16s and picked up an enemy AK-47 or SKS as their battle rifle. During Operation Iraqi Freedom, captured AK-47s have been issued to tank crews to supplement their M-4 carbines.

But there can be problems. Recently a Russian-made Dragunov SVD sniper rifle shipped from Iraq to an Air Force base in the United States for counter-terrorism training exploded when it was test fired. Investigators examining the weapon found someone had drilled a 1/8-inch hole through the barrel about 2 inches forward of the chamber. When the weapon was test-fired, gas exiting the holes vented directly into the hand guard. The high pressure (upwards of 44,000 psi for the 7.62x54R cartridge) shattered the hand guard, sending pieces

flying as far as 30 feet. Fortunately the weapon was mounted in a vice and remotely fired. Had someone been holding that weapon they'd be counting in fractions on their fingers—that is, if they still had any! And this wasn't the only sabotaged weapon. Another Dragunov SVD from the same weapons cache was found sabotaged in exactly the same way.

Let's face it, captured enemy weapons—especially those of Russian design—can be fascinating. The Dragunov SVD looks “sinister”—completely in character with its role as a sniper weapon. The many variations of the





Kalashnikov (AK-47, AK-74, AKM, etc.) represent the most recognizable weapons in the world. The Makarov pistol, while not as powerful as the Beretta M9, is handy, compact, and reliable. And there are other weapons, such as hand grenades. Last year a soldier in Afghanistan blew off his hand while attempting to demonstrate how to use a captured Chinese-built hand grenade. His accident reflected his lack of familiarity with the weapon.

The tactic of sabotaging weapons is not new, and soldiers need to be very careful not to be injured or killed. SFC Bennie Cagle, a ground accident investigator for the Army Safety Center, offers the following tips to protect yourself against sabotaged weapons:

- If you encounter a discarded enemy weapon, treat it as if loaded and remain wary




until the weapon is proven to be safe.

- If you must use a captured weapon because of a shortage of approved U.S. military weapons and such use is endorsed by the chain of command, then:

- Check the action to see it functions properly.
- Make sure the weapon is unloaded, the chamber is empty, and then check the bore for obstructions.
- Don't attempt to fire the weapon until it has been inspected thoroughly.
- If you are not sufficiently familiar with the weapon to inspect it yourself, take it to someone who is familiar with the weapon. Have the weapon field stripped to ensure all parts are intact and haven't been tampered with.

- Make sure you use the correct ammunition! 7.62 mm NATO ammunition is NOT interchangeable with the Russian-designed 7.62x39 (used in the AK-47 and many of its variants) or the 7.62x54R cartridge used in the Dragunov SVD and other weapons. Also, although the Makarov and Beretta pistols fire 9 mm cartridges, they are not interchangeable. The 9x18 mm Makarov has a projectile diameter of .363-inch versus the .355 of the Beretta's 9x19 mm cartridge. While it might be possible to fire a 9x19 mm cartridge in the Makarov, the undersized bullet would be inaccurate and the much higher firing pressure would be dangerous to the shooter.

- In combat, all bets are off. If your weapon malfunctions and there is an enemy weapon available, use it. However, if possible, try to become familiar with how various enemy personal weapons work before you're in a situation where you need to use one. 

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Editor's Note: Information concerning the sabotaged Dragunov SVD was provided by Mr. Joseph Vigil, chief of ground safety, Air Force Special Operations Command, Hurlburt Field, FL. He may be reached at (850) 884-2829, DSN 579-2829, or e-mail Joseph.Vigil@Hurlburt.af.mil

Attacking Privately Owned

Last year 103 of our Army's Soldiers didn't make it home because of privately owned vehicle (POV) accidents. One hundred and three families—fathers, mothers, husbands, wives, sons, and daughters were told that their special loved one was not coming home. When a Soldier dies in a POV accident, it creates a hole in a formation that leaves fellow Soldiers and leaders asking themselves what they could have done to prevent the loss. And funeral wreaths hang where yellow ribbons were once displayed with pride.

This story happens all too often across our Army. To save Soldiers' lives, the Army is re-energizing its campaign to prevent POV accidents on several fronts. This campaign includes Army-level and major command tools and programs to help installations and units reduce accidents. The most critical element of the campaign is getting leaders to emphasize personal discipline and accountability.

The Army has several POV accident reduction tools and programs. They include Click It or Ticket, the ASMIS-1 POV Risk Assessment Tool, and Combating Aggressive Driving training. In addition, the U.S. Army Safety Center (USASC) has begun deploying centralized accident investigation (CAI) teams on selected fatal POV accidents. Also, USASC is providing information on post-deployment POV and motorcycle safety training, and distributing POV safety video clips featuring NASCAR drivers. Let's take a closer look at these tools.

Click It or Ticket

Army installations are working with local law enforcement to support the national Click It or Ticket campaign. Military Police and local law enforcement officers are conducting traffic stops, spot-checking drivers and passengers to ensure they're wearing their seatbelts, and issuing tickets to those who aren't. Department of Defense standards require all vehicle occupants on federal installations to use seatbelts. Traffic surveys have shown that this program can increase seatbelt use

to nearly 100 percent, potentially saving several Soldiers' lives annually. Seatbelts don't prevent accidents, but they save lives by reducing the severity of injuries when accidents do happen. Military Police enforcement, leader emphasis, and personal discipline are essential to increasing seatbelt use.

ASMIS-1 POV Risk Assessment Tool

This automated program was featured in the January 2004 issue of *Countermeasure*. The ASMIS-1 POV module is an automated risk assessment tool to help leaders and Soldiers identify risks and develop effective control measures for the trips Soldiers will be taking. The goal is for Soldiers to understand the travel hazards of their trip and discuss with their first-line leaders how to reduce those risks. The program includes a summary of fatal accidents that have occurred under similar POV travel conditions. The program can be found at <https://safety.army.mil/asmis1/>.

Combating Aggressive Driving

The Installation Management Agency (IMA) is providing this training at selected locations based on the population and recent accident trends. For example, have you ever had someone cut you off in traffic, tailgate you, or pass you on a double yellow line? Those are just a few examples of aggressive driving. The Combating Aggressive Driving program concentrates on recognizing aggressive driving and how to deal with it. The program also teaches Soldiers to recognize when they are driving aggressively and ways to keep from being an aggressive driver. This program is an expansion of a pilot program tested by Forces Command (FORSCOM) at Fort Polk, LA.

POV Centralized Accident Investigations (CAI)

During October 2003, USASC deployed a CAI team to look into a fatal POV accident at Fort Lewis, WA. The purpose was to better understand POV accident causes, identify effective prevention

Vehicle Accidents

DENNIS KEPLINGER, CSP
Policy and Strategic Programs
U.S. Army Safety Center

efforts for units and installations, and show how Army and unit leaders can be more effectively involved in reducing POV accidents. All POV accidents where Soldiers are injured or killed must be reported to USASC, which will continue to send CAI teams to selected accidents.

Post-deployment POV Safety Training

Soldiers returning from the desert to their home station might be a bit rusty on their POV driving skills. Without specific leader intervention, these reduced driver skills combined with leave, celebrations, and extended travel plans can lead to an increase in POV accidents. Soldier and unit reintegration planning must include a review of accident avoidance techniques. Retired Mississippi State Trooper, Captain Pete Collins, recently spoke to a group of Soldiers at Fort Campbell, KY, and shared his 30 years' experience in dealing with POV accidents. A video of that presentation will be available for redeploying units in the near future.

Motorcycle Safety Training

The Army and Air Force Exchange Service reports that nearly 6,000 deployed Soldiers will return to home station and take delivery of brand-new motorcycles. New riders are at the greatest risk of being involved in accidents. Motorcycle safety training improves a rider's chances of avoiding a collision or surviving an accident. Motorcycle safety training also is required by Army regulations for anyone registering or riding a motorcycle on post. The Motorcycle Safety Foundation (MSF) will be working with the IMA to provide additional motorcycle safety training courses to meet the anticipated demand. Also, FORSCOM has coordinated with AAFES to offer motorcycle safety training to those who purchase their new bikes through AAFES.

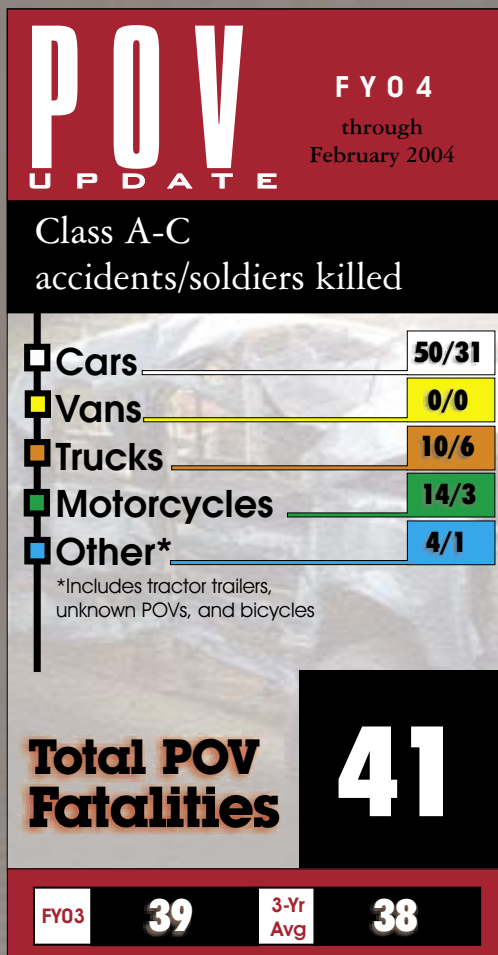
NASCAR Videos

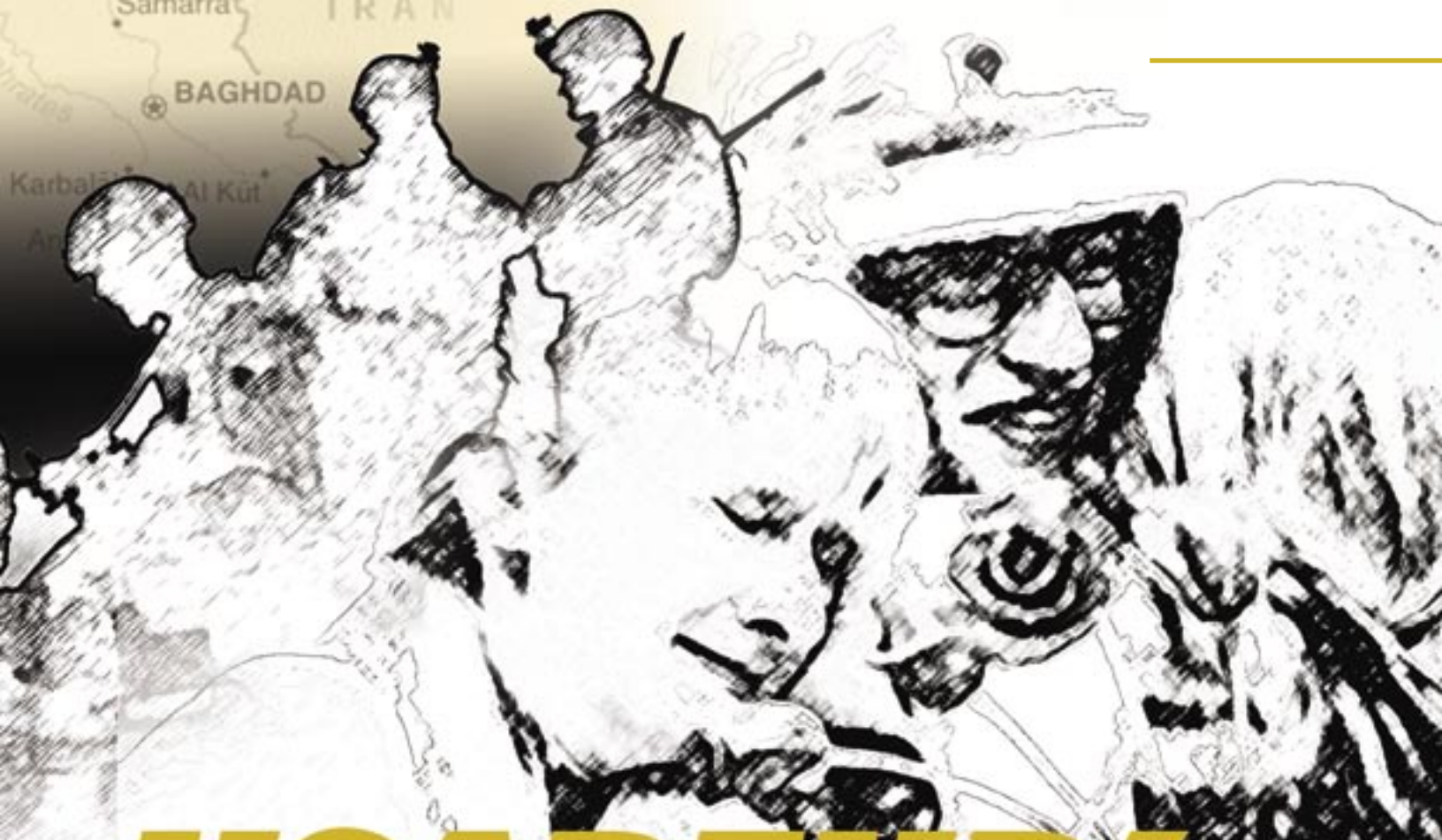
NASCAR has teamed up with USASC to produce several short public service traffic safety messages.

Several NASCAR drivers will be seen in the public service announcements in AAFES theaters. The messages will address relevant safety topics such as seatbelt use, speed, fatigue, and alcohol.

Leaders, buddies, and families can set a good example and help influence Soldiers to make smart driving decisions. With all the tools and initiatives underway across the Army, it's still the Soldier behind the wheel who must have the discipline to BE SAFE! 🏎️

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USAREUR's **Reintegration Program** **Eases Iraq Returns**

Troops and family members eagerly anticipating reunion after a year of untold hardships—both in Iraq and at home—might feel like they've earned a nice, long vacation. But there are a few things returning Soldiers need to take care of first.

GEN B.B. Bell, U.S. Army Europe (USAREUR) Commander, has made one thing clear: "Don't worry. No training, maintenance, or other unit work until troops have had plenty of time for rest and recuperation." GEN Bell calls this time an opportunity "to heal the warrior spirit."

The First Seven Days

Officials have mapped out a 45-day program designed to smoothly transition troops from the combat zone to home station. The process is called the Deployed Cycle Support Program and is designed to focus on the human dimension of redeployment. That process begins the moment the plane touches down in Europe. The main objective is to account for each Soldier and get them reunited with their family or into the barracks.

Each wave of arriving troops will be greeted by a general officer and a brief welcome-home ceremony. The only other speed bump before being released is that Soldiers will have to turn in weapons and any

other sensitive items.

The next day begins a seven day series of briefings, medical screenings, and other tasks. That's seven days straight—no weekends or federal holidays that happen to fall within that window. The good news is that Soldiers will be on a half-day schedule, working only about four hours a day. The idea is to gradually reintroduce Soldiers to life outside the combat zone and allow leaders to identify any Soldiers who might be having a difficult time readjusting. There will be deployed unit chaplains and local community chaplains

“working in tandem” to prepare Soldiers and their spouses for the stress and family friction that typically come in the wake of a long deployment. Community leaders also are planning a number of retreats not

only for couples, but also for single Soldiers. Meanwhile, school leaders will have teams of counselors and psychologists on hand to help children deal with any reunion anxiety.

The Fun Begins

After Soldiers have ticked off all 17 required “pre-block leave” items on their reintegration checklist, they will be eligible to immediately begin 30 days of vacation. The Army has reopened the Von Steuben Hotel in Garmisch specifically for returning troops and those on mid-tour rest and relaxation (R&R) leave. The Patton Hotel, another Army-run lodge in Garmisch, has dedicated half of its rooms for troops just out of the combat zone. Both facilities are offering discounted packages. Returning troops and their families also can expect deep discounts in their local communities for everything from trips and tours to arts-and-crafts programs.

Plans are also in the works to extend the time parents can remove their preschool children from child development centers without being charged. Currently, parents can take their children out for two weeks; however, four weeks is being requested so families can spend the entire block leave together without having to pay for child care not being used. Likewise, teachers and administrators of Department of Defense Dependents' Schools in Europe are preparing for extended absences among school-age students. Students will have two weeks to make up any missed assignments upon returning.

Show Me the Money

“With tax breaks and combat zone stipends, many troops should have plenty of cash waiting for them when they get home. But they should also be prepared to see a lot of that extra money in their paycheck disappear,” said COL Kevin Troller, Commander of the 266th Finance Command. On average, most troops have been getting an extra \$1,000 a month; however tax exclusion, hazardous duty, and hostile-fire pay all end once Soldiers leave the Middle East.

“Don't worry. No training, maintenance, or other unit work until troops have had plenty of time for rest and recuperation.”

Back to Work

Once block leave is over, officials say a final eight days have been carved out for Soldiers to finish up any unresolved personal issues. That's also the time to check off any remaining items on the reintegration checklist. Battalion commanders will use the checklist to certify each Soldier has completed the reintegration process with USAREUR Headquarters, so troops should expect that step to be high priority when they get back to work.

That rounds out the 45-day plan. From there the focus will shift to fixing gear and eventually heading back out to the training ranges. Officials hope to have units combat-ready within 270 days after arriving back in Europe.

Note: The 3rd Infantry Division, Fort Stewart, GA, and the 101st Airborne Division, Fort Campbell, KY, have implemented similar post-deployment reintegration programs. Privately owned vehicle safety is one key focus for returning Soldiers. Fort Stewart tripled the number of motorcycle safety courses presented because of the large number of returning Soldiers who have purchased motorcycles. Fort Campbell is currently offering the Motorcycle Safety Foundation Basic Rider's Course for new motorcycle riders. Nearly 100 new riders have attended during February and March.

*Editor's note: We at the Army Safety Center continually strive to develop ways to protect our Soldiers, both on and off duty, and very often look to existing best practices as we become aware of them. This redeployment strategy, implemented by GEN Bell for Soldiers returning from combat to USAREUR, is a best practice. This article excerpted from **Stars and Stripes** and edited due to space limitations. For the complete article, go to <http://www.stripes.com>.*

Operation Guardian Angel



During war, Army buddies watch over each other. However, when they leave their buddies and return home, they need family and friends to watch over and assist them through what can be a difficult time of readjustment.

Why are Soldiers Returning from War at High Risk?

Many Soldiers are returning from a war zone where they have served for 12 months or longer. Returning home will be a major readjustment for them. They will have to readapt to a normal lifestyle again because driving, social interaction, and everyday life will be much different from what they experienced in Iraq. Some Soldiers may tend to drink too much, while others may experience difficulties with relationships. These factors place them at high risk for accidents and injuries.


What is Operation Guardian Angel?

Operation Guardian Angel is a national campaign that encourages families, friends, neighborhoods, and communities to remind Soldiers to be safe after they've returned home. Operation Guardian Angel's goals are to protect Soldiers from accidents and injuries, to let Soldiers know Americans are

proud of them and care about them, and to provide citizens an opportunity to get involved with Soldiers. Anyone, civilian or military, who cares enough to help Soldiers can be a Guardian Angel.

What can Guardian Angels do?

Guardian Angels can talk to Soldiers and remind them to drive carefully, have a designated driver if they drink, or offer to call a cab to get the Soldier home safely. In recreational activities such as hiking or swimming, Guardian Angels can remind Soldiers of the importance of using the buddy system and appropriate safety gear. The Guardian Angel's role, just as the name implies, is to be there for Soldiers and help them be safe for the sake of themselves, their families, friends, and the Army.

Editor's Note: The Guardian Angel program was initiated by LTG Ricardo S. Sanchez, commander of Combined Joint Task Force 7 (CJTF-7), Baghdad, Iraq. CW4 Darrell Smith, V Corps Aviation Safety Officer, developed the program for Soldiers returning from Iraq. If you would like to apply to be a Guardian Angel, you may do so on the U.S. Army Safety Center's Web site at <http://safety.army.mil/guardianangel/index.html>. 



Know Your Drive-Off Capabilities

When you're driving an Army motor vehicle, whether in a tactical convoy or off-road in the field, you need to know about any dangers along the route. Perhaps there are critical areas where driving off the road is not an option because of dangerous terrain. Perhaps some areas are better than others for a comfort stop. If you've driven an Army vehicle, you probably can imagine any number of tactical scenarios where you'd need to drive off the road in a hurry.

The problem is that some Soldiers arrive at their units with little or no driving experience. Imagine a Soldier driving Chalk 3 in a 10-vehicle convoy when the dirt road turns into a muddy, slippery mess. Do you really think that Soldier will be thinking far enough ahead to plan his actions should a drive-off be necessary?

I'll give you a case in point.


I was a 19-year-old infantryman taking part in a field exercise with my unit. The exercise was nothing out of the usual; in fact, it was very typical because of the rain and mud. I was driving Chalk 2 and had three years' driving experience. However, this was the first time I'd driven outside the unit training area. The rain was coming down hard, the rutted dirt road was just wide enough to fit through, and there were large erosion ditches on both sides.

I knew the ditches were there, but I was

only paying attention to what was

going on right

in front of me. I was about five truck lengths behind the lead truck when it suddenly swerved off the road and back on again. Fortunately for him, he did this on a section of the road that didn't have the erosion ditches. Just then I noticed a turtle in the road in front of me. I started to swerve off the road to miss it, but my truck commander grabbed the wheel and kept it from turning. I'd thought I could swerve just as the lead truck had. In that instant, I didn't think about the ditches on either side of me—I just wanted to miss the turtle. Fortunately, it was a lucky day for all involved. I didn't go into a ditch and the turtle got across the road without being squashed.

The point is, however, that drivers need to be briefed on drive-off problems or limitations before they get on the road. Some roads run along thousand-foot-tall cliffs, while others might border mine fields. To keep drivers on the "straight and narrow," make sure you emphasize the "terrain" part of your mission, enemy, terrain, troops, and time available (METT-T) briefing. And do it before your drivers head out on a mission! 

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HERE'S JOEY!



I was getting geared up to take an all terrain vehicle (ATV) riders' course. The instructor told us how the ATV worked and showed us different riding techniques, which we would practice later. When the structured portion of the class ended, we rode around the training area as the instructor pointed out hazards such as ditches and creek beds.

We had eight riders in our class. As the "Free Ride" portion of the class began, we split into two groups of four and went in opposite directions. My group consisted of a captain, second lieutenant, first sergeant, and a sergeant first class. We took turns leading the group as we rode around the training area. Before we were done, there would be a couple of "memorable" incidents!

The first incident happened as we completed a lap around the training

area. The group leader unwittingly rode a little too close to a ditch—he later recalled that it "snuck up on him." He was able to avoid the ditch and tried, unsuccessfully, to wave off the second rider. The second rider missed the warning and went into the ditch sideways.

At first I thought the rider had broken his leg. Fortunately, because he kept his knees tucked in tight to the machine, he was not injured. The narrow ditch was about 6 feet deep, and the ATV was wedged in the bottom. We were able to stand it upright and pull it out with another ATV. Looking back, we should have reassessed the situation and called it a day.

But we didn't—we continued our free ride and headed to a steep hill. We'd climbed many hills throughout the day. The leader lined up his approach and began climbing the hill,

but about half-way up the ATV started to stall, so he downshifted. The ATV took off and then everything seemed to happen in slow motion. The leader fell backwards onto the ground and landed in a kneeling position. The 600-pound ATV then rolled backwards and stopped on top of him. The rest of us hurriedly ran up and rolled the ATV off him. He said the pain was intense, and we assumed the worst. Fortunately, we had a medic on site who took command of the situation. He dispatched a rider to the training facility to call for an ambulance. In the meantime, the medic secured the rider's neck and was able to roll him over onto his back.


He could still move his toes and arms, which were positive signs. The ambulance eventually showed up and took him to the hospital. His X-rays showed only a small

chip in a vertebra. Although he had pulled and bruised several muscles in his back, he was very lucky not to have broken his back, neck, or ribs. After he realized how serious his accident was, he said, "If I had not been wearing my helmet, I know my head would have been crushed."

Lessons Learned

- Risk assessments are a valuable tool. A site recon prior to the training would have elevated the risk assessment level.
- The use of protective equipment is NOT

negotiable—it's a must when training!

- Pay attention to the events and incidents around you and learn from them.
- No matter how much you train to be safe accidents can still happen, so be ready to respond.
- Think safety and act safely. 

CPT Chad Roudebush
C-1-125 FA
MIARNG

READERS WRITE


WHAT DOES PELIGROSO MEAN?

The January 2004 issue of *Countermeasure* featured a story titled, "What's in that Can O' Air?" In the story the author almost torched himself using what he thought was a foreign-made can of air to clean the lens of a Proxima projector. The author noted there was a picture of a cat and a dog on the label, which also had the word "Peligroso" printed on it. Since he wasn't quite sure what those meant, we asked our readers for some help. CW4 Joseph Davis, FLARNG; and Mr. C. Robert Durand, Fort Snelling, MN, gave us the correct translation of the word "Peligroso" (dangerous). SGT Jason P. Deters, MIARNG, offered the following insights:

Peligroso means "dangerous" in Spanish. The can of compressed air most likely came from Spain, and probably used ether as a propellant because of the low cost. The picture of a cat and dog may have been a warning that the fumes were noxious or

harmful to small pets. Many European manufacturers of canned air use ether as a cheap propellant.

Later, he added ...

The mental image of a soldier making everything dress-right-dress for a presentation only to have a ball of fire put a crease in the process is hilarious. I actually had a similar, but not so severe, incident with a Proxima while preparing for a general's brief. There was dust and a greasy fingerprint on the lens, which I attempted to wipe off with a soft cotton cloth. Well, the lens was hot enough I burned my fingers and scorched the cloth, which left a foul odor in the room that lingered for nearly an hour. Hindsight being 20-20, I've decided to ensure the Proxima is powered down and cool in the future before attempting such on-the-spot maintenance! 

Three Duds Looking for a **BLAST**

WILLIAM COX
CP-12 Safety Intern
Fort Hood, TX

Remember the old cartoon where Bugs Bunny was trying to help a gremlin detonate an artillery shell? The gremlin swung his sledgehammer time after time, but only made a “clink.” Frustrated, Bugs took the sledgehammer, wound up, and let fly the hardest swing he could. As the sledgehammer was just about to hit the front of the shell, Bugs stopped the swing and, with a terrified look on his face, said, “What am I doing!” You’d think such shenanigans would only happen in cartoons—but you’d be wrong. Give young Soldiers some free time and unexploded ordnance (UXO), and you’d be surprised at the results.

I was a brand-new Army private stationed in Germany and was with my unit at Hohenfels on my first field problem. I was very excited because this was something totally new for me.

We pulled into a defensive position inside a tree line at night and put out the standard guard. The next morning while the squad leader was at a meeting, I got together with a couple of buddies and investigated the area. We discovered some belted M-60 blank rounds and unfired Hoffman devices. The way we acted, you’d have thought we were kids who’d found a new toy box.

We fashioned necklaces from the Hoffmans and started pouring the gunpowder from the M-60 rounds onto the ground. After pouring out a sufficient amount of powder, we lit it just to watch it burn—you know, typical Soldier “fun stuff.” This went on for about an hour. We were having a grand time until our squad leader suddenly returned, saw us and almost had a


heart attack. He immediately put a stop to our fun and told us to gather all the remaining ammunition and bring it to him. We had no idea what the big deal was. Afterwards, he “educated” us on the hazards we’d faced.

Later, as I moved up through the ranks, I understood what he taught us. We had unwittingly placed ourselves in great danger. I always remembered this lesson and taught my Soldiers about the danger of playing with ammunition—even if it was only training ammunition.

Young Soldiers are always looking for ways to entertain themselves in the field. Unfortunately UXO can look a lot like “toys” to inexperienced Soldiers looking for some “creative” fun. However, playing with UXO can give them a “bang” they may never recover from. If you’re a leader, educate your Soldiers so they don’t learn the hard way. If you’re a Soldier, remember the life you save could be your own.

Safety Rules for UXOs

- Never approach a suspected explosive ordnance item.
- Avoid the area where unexploded ordnance is located.
- Never attempt to move or disturb explosive ordnance.
- Never attempt to disassemble any explosive ordnance item.
- Never transmit radio signals near explosive ordnance.
- Report ordnance to your supervisor.
- Mark the area where the ordnance is located in a highly visible fashion to protect others.

Leave the ordnance handling to the professionals. It takes trained experts to accurately assess the situation and remove any explosive hazards. For more information on the marking of UXOs, check Graphic Training Aid (GTA) 9-12-1, Field Manual (FM) 21-16, and FM 90-13-1. 



Peeing White, Ready to Fight!


LTC JOSEPH F. MCKEON
Command Surgeon,
U.S. Army Safety Center

sleeves down and your gloves on, you're a walking teapot. As your body sweats to cool off, you're losing water. If you wait until you're thirsty enough to want to drink, it's too late—you're already behind the curve! Do you realize that just a 2-percent decrease in your total body water will lower your functional IQ? Who can afford to lose intelligence? Heck, if I had 10 more IQ points, I could have been a pilot instead of just a flight surgeon!

So how can you tell if you're adequately hydrated? You've seen the charts that tell you how much to drink for a certain workload in a given environment. Some Soldiers think "more is better"—so as long as they continue to down water, they'll be OK. However, metabolic needs vary with the individual, and it's possible to become water intoxicated and die. A good rule of thumb is you should have to hit the latrine every 90 minutes to two hours. Check your urine color. It should not be a concentrated yellow color. We used to say, "Peeing white, ready to fight!"

If it's lunchtime and you haven't gone since you got up, you aren't drinking enough. Coffee doesn't count. Caffeine (also from sodas) is a diuretic. That means it makes you urinate more than you drink. You are "bouncing checks" as far as hydration goes (more coming out than going in). So drink water, not coffee or sodas.

If you're a leader, check on your troops. If you think you aren't a leader, think again. Whenever two or more are gathered, somebody is the leader! Look out for your battle buddy, and look out for yourself. Drink water, avoid strenuous work in the heat of the day, and acclimatize before stressing your troops.

Take care of yourself. Where else are you going to live? 

Contact the author at (334) 255-2763, DSN 558-2763, or e-mail joseph.mckeon@safetycenter.army.mil

This is serious. We are a nation at war, and we keep getting Soldiers hurt or killed! You, the Soldier or civilian reading this article, matter...truly. I don't care if you're an MH-47 pilot or a contractor in a tool room. You matter. There aren't enough of us to go around as it is. Take care of yourself and your battle buddy. Make sure you make it home! Odds are you are only about one-fourth of the way through your life. Don't rush things and end up dead. Take a minute and do it right!

OK, here we go again...another article on heat injury prevention. Is it almost summertime already? Time flies, whether you're doin' 20 or just getting through your initial obligation. Any way you look at it, it's going to get hot. And heat kills, literally. Batteries, paint jobs, unwatered plants, dogs left in cars, or unacclimatized Soldiers—the single biggest environmental threat is heat. And it's unforgiving.

Here's the deal. We've got four divisions moving in, four moving out. Everybody is going to be exposed to a heat threat this summer. Whether you are deployed for a month to a maneuver training center (NTC, JRTC, or CMTC) or for a year elsewhere, you will be faced with a heat threat in the coming months. When you're packing your full battle rattle with your

There I Was Being St

ANONYMOUS

There's a difference between being "crazy" and being "stupid." Crazy is weighing the risks and then ignoring them to do something needless and dangerous. Stupid is doing something dangerous without even considering the consequences to yourself or others.

I was a 19-year-old private first class with less than a year's active duty. I was working as a legal specialist for a mechanized infantry battalion. I had built a pretty good relationship with my command, and was respected for my work ethic. My experience was described as "beyond my years."

Our Corps had a policy called "family time" where Soldiers were released on Thursdays at 1500 for personal time. I lived in the barracks, and my friends were my coworkers and supervisors. It was during one of these family times that my world came crashing down.

I was in my squad leader's room. He was a corporal who seemed to have it all figured out. We'd been drinking beer for a couple of hours, and all he kept talking about was how great his new car was. My roommate, a specialist, came up to see what we were doing. My roommate really loved his car and believed he couldn't be beat, so the conversation immediately

escalated to a challenge for a race.

We headed out without thinking twice. I rode with my roommate, as I was comfortable with his driving abilities, and the corporal followed us in his car. We drove about a mile to a range road, pulled up side by side, and took off. The race was close at the start, but my roommate and I quickly pulled ahead and were soon doing better than 100 mph. As we approached a 70-degree sweeping curve, we slowed and rounded the bend with ease. The corporal saw this and thought it was his opportunity to pass us and win. He continued accelerating, but the curve was too sharp. He ran off the road, cut his wheel, careened across the median, and hit a tank trail on the other side of the road. His car rolled three times and finally landed on its wheels.

When we turned around to go to his aid, I saw something I'll never forget and never want to see again. The roof of his new car had caved in. The windshield had collapsed into the driver's compartment and was blood-splattered. I saw the corporal's limp body slumped over in the driver's seat. At first I thought he was dead, but he came to as we opened his door.

A member of the range safety staff drove up within a minute and called for an ambulance

and the military police. We left the corporal in the car until medical personnel arrived. They pulled him from the car and evacuated him to a hospital. He had broken his neck, but at least he survived. He was later air evacuated to Fort Sam Houston, TX, to have a metal brace bolted

tupid

to his head with long, metal screws. He had to wear that thing for months. Picture it.

The corporal lived because he wore his seatbelt—no doubt about it. He'd been doing approximately 115 mph when he attempted to round that curve.

What happened to the three of us? Not much. I was arrested at the scene for underage drinking, and my roommate was released. The corporal's blood samples were lost, so no (DUI) charges were filed. My roommate and I received a good old-fashioned butt chewing from the battalion executive officer.


But that doesn't mean there weren't consequences. The first thing I lost was the confidence of my chain of command. I worked through it, but this incident hung over my head for years. Do I appreciate my commander not taking legal action against us and choosing instead to let us learn from our mistake? You bet. I'm still in the Army today because my commander didn't feel that making an example of me was necessary. The result of our actions was more than enough.

Where did we, as young Soldiers, fail? We failed to consider the possible consequences of our actions, and we failed to see alcohol as a factor. We failed to see the corporal's alcohol problem, which was identified later. Basically,

we failed to take care of each other. In the end, there were no rewards, no winners, and no bragging rights ... only losers.

What about our chain of command? They didn't give us the training we needed to recognize the dangers we could face. Young Soldiers don't have the life experiences to help them weigh the pros and cons of their actions or recognize the possible consequences. Our chain of command also failed after the incident by not using it as a learning experience to identify where we went wrong and what we could have done different. This is called risk management, which is only learned through training.

It's no different with today's generation of young Soldiers than it was 10 years ago, except that leadership has more experience with risk management. Leaders need to use their experience to teach Soldiers to be safe so they don't repeat the cycle of lessons learned the hard way.

If you're a leader, learn what young Soldiers do in their off-duty time. If they drink, teach them to do so responsibly. If they like fast cars and racing, take them to a local racetrack, pay their entry fee, and let them race in a controlled environment. They'll learn to be safe because you've trained them to be safe. Don't let them become another statistic! 

“Leaders need to use their experience to teach Soldiers to be safe so they don't repeat the cycle of lessons learned the hard way.”

Editor's Note: The name of the author has been withheld by request. Also, this article reinforces the point made in last month's DASAF's Corner. Lessons noted but not learned are wasted opportunities to make things safer. The price for that oversight could be a Soldier's life.

An In-Flight Movie for Soldiers

Think you'll be bored on that flight back from Iraq? While you're munching the airline pretzels, the Army will provide you a little entertaining encouragement to be safe—Southern style.

The man with the deep-Southern drawl is retired Mississippi State Patrolman Captain Pete Collins. The video you'll be seeing is part of the Army's "Be Safe" Campaign and has a very focused theme.

When it comes to safety, Collins explains, "No one cares until it's personal. 'Safety' is just another word unless it knocks at your door."

The 30-year veteran state patrolman has worked 184 fatalities. He talks about a chilling experience where he held a little boy thrown from his drunk father's pickup truck. The father didn't buckle the boy's seatbelt, and he died in Collins' arms as his father watched from a distance. He also recalls the day he knocked on a mother's door to tell her all three of her children died on the way to their school's homecoming football game. The driver who hit them had a blood alcohol content of .38.

He explains that although he was trained to write down names and not get involved, he could not follow those rules.

"I committed the cardinal sin as a trooper. I let my job get personal and it changed my life forever," he said.

Because of his experiences, he wants to make safety "personal" to others in the hope it may one day save their lives. He said he is honored to be part of the Army's Safety Campaign because it allows him to give something back to the Soldiers who keep the American flag flying. 🇺🇸

Information provided courtesy of Kelli Petermeyer, Fort Campbell Courier, Fort Campbell, KY.

Your Opinions Can Change Things!

Tired of inconvenient, uncomfortable, inadequate, or hard-to-use seatbelts in Army vehicles or aircraft? Do you have an idea for making those seatbelts more user-friendly, comfortable, and effective?

Now is the time to make your opinion known! The U.S. Army Aeromedical Research Laboratory (USAARL) would like to hear what you've got to say. Just take a few minutes and fill out their seatbelt questionnaire at www.usaarl.army.mil/seatbelt/seatbelt.htm. All suggestions or comments will be kept confidential. 🇺🇸

For more information, contact Mr. John Gouda, USAARL, Fort Rucker, AL. He can be reached by e-mail at john.gouda@us.army.mil



ACV

Class A

■ Foreign national civilian was killed when the parked vehicle he was sitting in was struck by an M1A1 Abrams tank and overturned. No other details were provided.

Class B

■ Bradley Fighting Vehicle was destroyed by a fire that reportedly began in the turret area. The heater is the suspected source of the fire. No personnel were injured in the accident.



AMV

Class A

■ Soldier died from trauma to his chest after he fell from an LMTV. The LMTV was towing a water trailer when it hit a bump in the road, causing the Soldier's door to come open. The Soldier was the TC at the time of the accident.

■ Soldier was killed when the 5-ton truck he was driving overturned. The Soldier reportedly had swerved to avoid a hole he mistook to be an explosive.

■ Soldier suffered fatal injuries when the HMMWV he was driving struck the inside curb in a traffic circle and overturned.

Class B

■ Four Soldiers were hospitalized with injuries when their HMMWV overturned. The driver swerved to avoid a collision with a civilian vehicle, causing the HMMWV to roll over.



Personnel Injury

Class A

■ Soldier died after being struck by an M-60 round during night infiltration course training. No other details were provided.

■ Two Soldiers drowned in a river. One Soldier fell from a patrol boat into the river, and the other Soldier jumped into the water to retrieve him. Both Soldiers' bodies were recovered the next day.

■ Soldier was killed when the bomb she was defusing exploded. No other details were provided.

■ Soldier died while conducting PT. No other details were provided.

■ Soldier was killed while emplacing communication lines. The Soldier inadvertently contacted a high voltage wire and was electrocuted.

■ Soldier suffered fatal injuries when the homemade bomb he was defusing exploded. No other details were provided.

■ Soldier died after being struck in the chest by an M-4 round. Another Soldier was cleaning the weapon when it discharged the round, killing one Soldier and wounding another in his shoulder.

Class B

■ Soldier lost his left eye after accidentally puncturing it with a screwdriver. The Soldier was replacing the air intake system filter when he applied pressure to the system's cover with the screwdriver, causing the system to come apart. The force caused the

Soldier's hand to strike his eye. The Soldier was working on his POV at the local post's auto craft shop.



POV

Class A

■ Three Soldiers were killed when their vehicle ran off a highway overpass and crashed onto the roadway below. The accident occurred during the early-morning hours on an interstate highway.

■ Soldier suffered fatal injuries when the vehicle she was riding in collided head-on with another vehicle. The civilian driving the other vehicle also was killed.

■ Soldier died when his vehicle ran off the roadway, became airborne, and collided with an embankment. The Soldier was returning home from a shopping trip when he lost control of the vehicle, causing the accident. Tests showed the Soldier had a blood alcohol content of 0.176 at the time of the accident. In addition, the Soldier was not wearing his seatbelt.

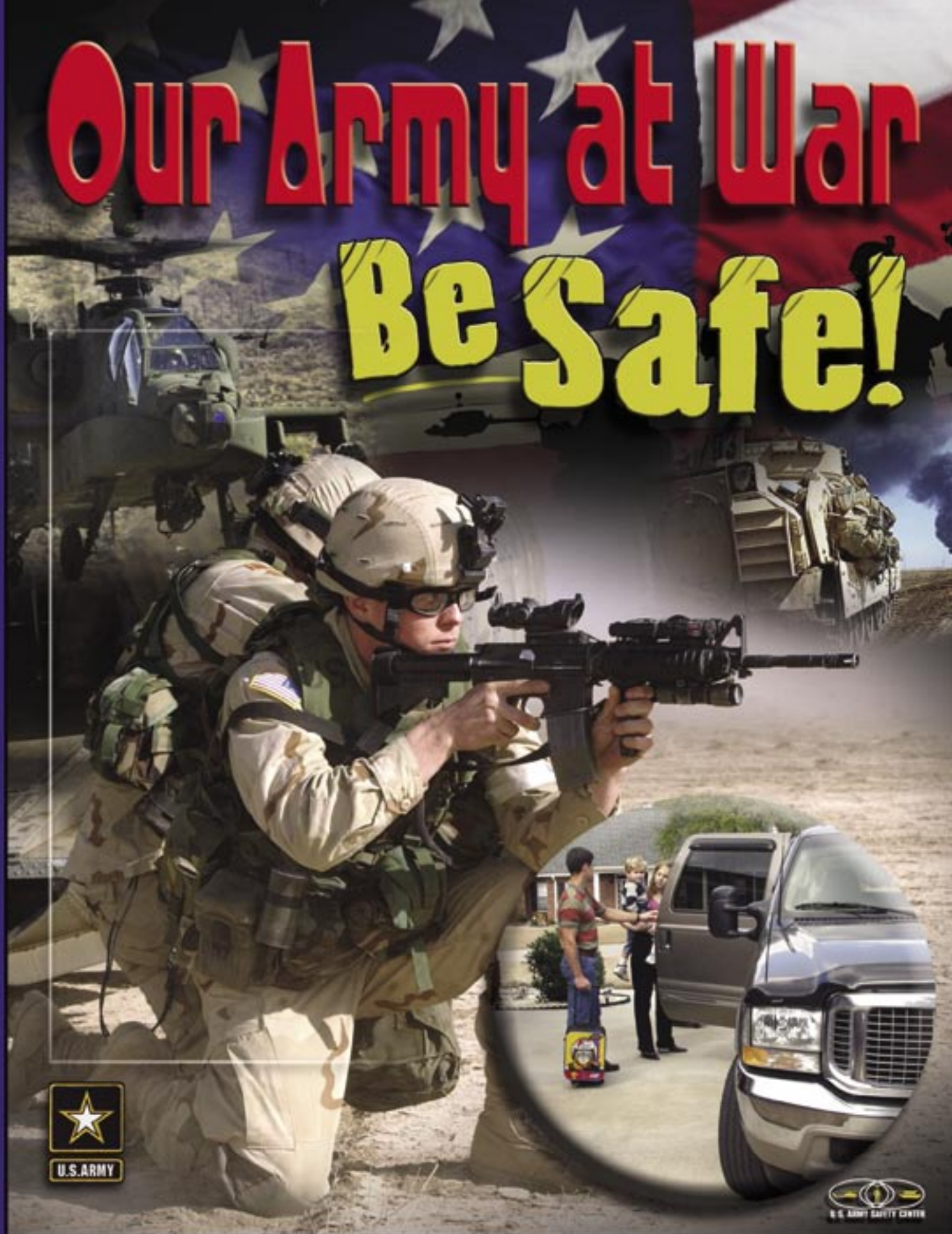
■ Soldier was killed when the vehicle he was riding in ran off the roadway, struck a tree, and caught fire.

■ Soldier suffered fatal injuries when the right-front tire of his vehicle exploded, causing his vehicle to veer out of control and strike a tree.

■ Soldier was killed when he lost control of his vehicle and it left the roadway and struck a tree. The Soldier, who was speeding, had swerved to avoid a tractor-trailer that moved into his lane.

Our Army at War

Be Safe!



Make it Home